

Using Nonfiction to Investigate Acts of Courage

GRADE	This unit includes seven lessons that can be implemented in a two- to four-week period.
3	

D R A F T



Communication Arts

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Unit Overview

This unit consists of seven lessons that focus on reading and writing nonfiction while investigating the concept of courage. Students will use various pre- and post-reading strategies to comprehend the content and identify the features and elements of nonfiction texts. They will then apply their understanding of nonfiction to produce their own expository texts, exploring and focusing their thoughts with graphic organizers and creating prose with a main idea and supporting details.

The concept (courage) investigated in the unit provides a vehicle for engaging students with important content and helping them make personally meaningful connections between the texts used in the unit, their own experiences, and the wider world. Ideally, students will find that courage is a trait that applies equally to everyday situations in their lives—helping a friend in need, resisting peer pressure—as well as to dramatic events involving “heroic” characters—risking one’s life to save others, flying around the world in a one-engine plane, etc.

Throughout the unit, student learning will be assessed formatively (to help the teacher shape instruction) and summatively (to determine students’ proficiency). As part of the summative assessment, the unit contains a section on multiple-choice and constructed-response items, to help prepare students for MAP and other standardized assessments.

The ultimate goal of the unit is for students to meet the grade-level expectations for reading and writing nonfiction, develop the relevant higher-order thinking skills identified by the Show-Me Standards, and construct, in the process, a deep and personally meaningful understanding of the concept of courage.

Essential Questions

What is nonfiction?

What is courage?

How can we read and write nonfiction to develop an understanding of courage?

How can we communicate our understanding of courage through our expository writing?

How can we apply this learning to other inquiries?

Unit Goals

To promote a focus on higher-order thinking skills (e.g., information processing, communicating, problem solving, and decision making), this unit incorporates the Missouri Show-Me Goal/Performance Standards. The Show-Me content standards are reflected in the grade-level expectations addressed. The goals for the unit and related grade-level expectations appear below.

Show-Me Standard Goal 1. The student will gather, analyze, and apply information and ideas.

- 1.1 develop questions and ideas to initiate and refine research
- 1.5 comprehend and evaluate written...works
 - apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension (R1F)
- 1.6 discover and evaluate patterns and relationships in information, ideas and structures
 - locate and interpret key information in illustrations, title, chapter headings, table of contents, charts, diagrams, graphs, glossary, captions and maps to answer questions (R3A)
 - explain examples of sensory details and figurative language within the context of nonfiction text (R3B)
- 1.8 organize data, information and ideas into useful forms...for analysis or presentation
 - use details from the text to answer questions, retell main idea and important details, organize a sequence of events, identify simple cause and effect, draw conclusions, compare and contrast texts, identify author's purpose for writing text, and make inferences about problems and solutions (R3C)
 - apply post-reading skills to identify and explain the relationship between the main idea and supporting details (R1H)

Show-Me Standard Goal 2. The student will communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom.

- 2.1 plan and make written, oral and visual presentations for a variety of purposes and audiences
 - write expository text with a main idea and three or more supporting details (W3C)
- 2.4 present perceptions and ideas regarding works of the humanities
 - use details from the text to answer questions, retell main idea and important details, organize a sequence of events, identify simple cause and effect, draw conclusions, compare and contrast texts, identify author's purpose for writing text, and make inferences about problems and solutions (R3C)

Show-Me Standard Goal 3. The student will recognize and solve problems.

- 3.1 identify problems and define their scope and elements
 - use details from the text to answer questions, retell main idea and important details, organize a sequence of events, identify simple cause and effect, draw conclusions, compare and contrast texts, identify author's purpose for writing text, and make inferences about problems and solutions (R3C)
- 3.5 reason inductively from a set of specific facts and deductively from general premises

- apply post-reading skills to identify and explain the relationship between the main idea and supporting details (R1H)
- use details from the text to answer questions, retell main idea and important details, organize a sequence of events, identify simple cause and effect, draw conclusions, compare and contrast texts, identify author's purpose for writing text, and make inferences about problems and solutions (R3C)

Unit Plan

Lesson 1: Introduce the concepts of nonfiction and courage. Examine nonfiction text features and elements. Consider the qualities of courageous characters. Develop a Word Wall.

Lesson 2: Examine sensory details in nonfiction text.

Lesson 3: Read nonfiction articles about courageous people. Use the Five Ws to identify main idea and supporting details. Summarize information. Compare and contrast articles.

Lesson 4: Read nonfiction text and discuss “everyday” acts of courage. Write a paragraph to answer the question, “What is an act of courage?”

Lesson 5: Use nonfiction text features to locate information. Select a biography to read in a literature circle. Write a summary of the biography.

Lesson 6: Research and write about a courageous person. Create a biographical profile poster that includes a written summary of the person's life.

Lesson 7: Pre-write, draft, revise, and edit expository text.

Grade-Level Expectation Continuum

In this unit, students develop the following communication-arts skills (targeted learning) as they investigate the concept of courage. While supporting students in the development of these skills, teachers should consider students' previous learning and keep in mind their future learning. Although the following chart lists each grade-level expectation in its entirety, the bold type denotes the specific parts of a grade-level expectation addressed in the unit.

PREVIOUS LEARNING	TARGETED LEARNING	FUTURE LEARNING
Develop and apply pre-reading strategies, with assistance.	Apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension. (R1F)	Apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension.
Apply post-reading strategies to identify the main idea and supporting details.	Apply post-reading skills to identify and explain the relationship between the main idea and supporting details. (R1H)	Apply post-reading skills to comprehend text.
Locate and explain information in illustrations, titles, headings, captions, diagrams, charts and graphs.	Locate and interpret key information in illustrations, title, chapter headings, table of contents, charts, diagrams, graphs, glossary, captions and maps to answer questions. (R3A)	Apply information in chapter headings, tables of contents and glossary features to answer questions to comprehend text.
Identify and explain author's use of rhythm, rhyme and alliteration in nonfiction text.	Explain examples of sensory details and figurative language within the context of nonfiction text. (R3B)	Interpret and explain figurative language in nonfiction text.
Use details from the text to answer questions, identify main ideas, retell sequence of events, and make inferences.	Use details from the text to answer questions, retell main idea and important details, organize a sequence of events, identify simple cause and effect, draw conclusions, compare and contrast texts, identify author's purpose for writing text, and make inferences about problems and solutions. (R3C)	Use details from the text to make predictions, make inferences, distinguish between fact and opinion, and explain author's purpose.
Write expository text, with assistance, with a main idea and supporting details.	Write expository text with a main idea and three or more supporting details. (W3C)	Write expository and persuasive paragraphs with a main idea or point to prove, three or more supporting details, and a concluding sentence.

Teacher Notes

Time Frame

This unit can be implemented in a two- to four-week period. However, this time frame will be affected by the following factors.

- the amount of time a teacher allocates in the school day for communication arts (e.g., the number of times he or she reads aloud each day)
- the depth of students' prior knowledge and the need for additional mini-lessons (i.e., systematic direct instruction for an individual, small group, or whole class) that focus on specific communication arts skills
- the amount of time a teacher devotes to the development of higher-order thinking skills
- the complexity of the projects within the unit
- the decisions the teacher makes regarding how to form student work groups

Classroom Arrangement

The classroom should be arranged to accommodate whole-group direct instruction, as well as small group and individual work. In addition, there should be a highly visible place for a Word Wall and wall space to post student-generated charts and posters. Specific details regarding classroom arrangement are presented in each of the seven lessons.

Materials Needed

Specific materials needed are listed in each of the seven lessons.

Lessons

This unit consists of seven lessons, each of which builds on the learning that occurs in the previous one. Each lesson has one or more activities that are designed to be implemented in sequence; however, you may add or delete activities, depending on the needs of your students.

In the lessons, the following icons are used to indicate additional teacher support:



= additional explanation of an instructional strategy



= questions the teacher may use to help students develop higher-order thinking skills



= ideas for resources and/or extensions



= suggested strategies for formative/summative assessment

Lesson 1: Developing Initial Definitions of Courage and Nonfiction

Summary: Use a text (e.g., *The Bravest Dog Ever: The True Story of Balto*, by N. Standiford [1989]) to introduce students to the concepts of nonfiction and courage. Students reflect on the features and elements of nonfiction text and on the attributes of characters in the text who demonstrate courage.

Assessment: Students complete a graphic organizer.

Grade-level Expectations Addressed:

R1F: Apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension

R3C: Use details from the text to answer questions, retell main idea and important details, organize a sequence of events... [and] draw conclusions

Classroom Arrangement:

The classroom should be arranged to accommodate whole-group direct instruction, as well as small group and individual work. In addition, there should be a highly visible place for a Word Wall and wall space to post student-generated charts and posters.

Materials Needed:

- One copy of *The Bravest Dog Ever: The True Story of Balto* for each student
- Writer's notebook for each student

- Copy of the graphic organizer “I Know” for each student (see Handout at the end of the lesson)

Activities:

1. When introducing the text (in this lesson, *The Bravest Dog Ever*), model pre-reading strategies to help aid comprehension (e.g., examining the cover, title page, and illustrations; identifying prior knowledge; thinking about the story ahead of time).



To initiate the unit, provide students with an engaging entry point—a means for provoking interest in both nonfiction and the concept of courage. For modeling purposes, *The Bravest Dog Ever* is used in this lesson. Feel free, however, to substitute any similar type of text (nonfiction narrative depicting a courageous character) that is available to you.

2. Point out to students that since the title includes the word “true,” the story of Balto is a true story. Explain that another way of saying “true story” is “nonfiction.” On the board or overhead, draw a T-chart with the categories “nonfiction” and “fiction,” and ask the students to generate examples of both and explain the reasons why they think the nonfiction examples are “true” stories.
3. Referring back to the book, point out also that the title tells us Balto is a very brave dog. Explain that another word for “bravery” is “courageous.” Have students work with a partner to answer the questions “What is a courageous act?” and “What is a non-courageous act?”
4. After the students discuss with their partners, you can reconvene the group and record their responses on a T-chart (on an overhead or chart paper), with one side labeled “Courageous” and the other “Not Courageous.”



List the words you know that are synonyms for courage. (These words should be listed on the Word Wall.)

- List two examples of courageous acts.
 - List two non-examples of courageous acts.
 - Write a definition of courage.
5. Ask the students to think about how a dog—like Balto—might show courage. They should record their predictions in their writers’ notebooks.
 6. Read the book aloud, modeling thinking during reading. Ask students to listen for the ways in which Balto shows courage.
 7. Give students time to read the book. Then, as a whole class, discuss ways in which Balto showed courage.

8. Have students complete the “I Know” graphic organizer (see Handout at the end of the lesson), encouraging them to refer back to the text, if necessary. Students will turn in their graphic organizer to be assessed.



You can assess the “I Know” graphic organizer by using the following scoring guide.

First Detail: **1 point:** Gives relevant answer
0 points: Other

Second Detail: **1 point:** Gives relevant answer
0 points: Other

Third Detail: **1 point:** Gives relevant answer
0 points: Other

Handout: Lesson 1

Name: _____ Date: _____

I Know

TOPIC SENTENCE		
Balto showed courage.		
	FIRST DETAIL He _____.	
	SECOND DETAIL Next, he _____.	
	THIRD DETAIL Finally, he _____.	
CONCLUDING SENTENCE He showed courage when he _____, _____, and _____.		

Lesson 2: Exploring Sensory Detail in Nonfiction

Summary: As students continue to analyze the text *The Bravest Dog Ever: The True Story of Balto*, they consider how a writer's use of sensory details helps a reader's comprehension.

Assessment: Students choose a picture or sensory detail from the text and describe its effect in their writers' notebooks.

Grade-level Expectations Addressed:

R3B: Explain examples of sensory details...within the context of nonfiction text

Classroom Arrangement:

Students begin this lesson with whole-group instruction and then work individually.

Materials Needed:

- One copy of *The Bravest Dog Ever: The True Story of Balto* for each student
- Writer's notebook for each student
- Graphic organizer from lesson 1

Activities:

1. Return the graphic organizers to the students. Discuss how good writers use descriptive language to draw the readers into the story by helping them visualize it. Read a passage from *The Bravest Dog Ever* that has sensory details (such as page 23), pausing to "think aloud," to explain the images/senses that you are experiencing.
2. Ask students to recall the five senses, and record them on chart paper. Ask students to describe the sensory experiences they had while reading the book, pointing to specific sensory details on specific pages.



- How do sensory details help us as readers?
 - What did you smell, taste, touch, hear, or see as you read the book? What words in the book made you feel that way?
3. You may choose to read additional passages with sensory details. As a whole group, discuss how the use of sensory details helps our writing, in particular nonfiction writing. Have the students select a picture or a sensory detail from the book and describe in their writers notebooks the sensations they experienced. Circulate among the students as they are working, conferring with individual students about their thoughts. When students have completed the task, you can ask them to find a partner to share what they have written.
 4. Along the way, add new sensory words/phrases to the Word Wall.
 5. Students turn in their writers' notebooks.

Lesson 3: Identifying Courageous People in the News

Summary: To continue identifying attributes of courage, students select and read a different kind of nonfiction, classroom magazine articles. In this lesson, students investigate the features, elements, and purposes of expository prose.

Assessment: Students complete the “Five Ws Chart” handout (which appears at the end of the lesson) and write a paragraph summarizing the main idea and supporting details.

Grade-level Expectations Addressed:

- R1H Apply post-reading skills to identify and explain the relationship between the main idea and supporting details
- R3A Locate and interpret key information in illustrations, title, chapter headings, table of contents...captions to answer questions
- R3C Use details from the text to answer questions, retell main idea and important details, organize a sequence of events...draw conclusions, compare and contrast texts
- W3C Write expository text with a main idea and three or more supporting details

Classroom Arrangement:

Students will work as a whole group and in small groups in this lesson.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of five to six different current-event articles from classroom magazines (e.g., *Scholastic News*, *Time for Kids*, *Weekly Reader*, kids’ page of a local newspaper, etc.) that tell the story of a courageous person (so that each group has a different article, and each member of the group has a copy of it)

Note: Try to find articles on a variety of courageous acts, ranging from simple, everyday acts (e.g., a child who overcame his fear of the dark in order to help his sister) to dramatic acts in extreme situations (firefighters who risk their own lives to save others). Make sure that the articles have at least some of the nonfiction text features identified in grade-level expectation R3A.

- One copy of the “Five Ws Chart” handout (or other graphic organizer to map the elements of an article) for each student (see Handouts at the end of the lesson)
- One copy of the “Summary of the Article” handout for each student (see Handouts at the end of the lesson)

Activities:

1. Model reading an article from a classroom magazine (e.g., *Scholastic News*, *Time for Kids*, *Weekly Reader*, kids’ page of a local newspaper, etc.) that tells the story of a courageous person. Point out that the structure of an article usually includes details to answer the questions Who?, What?, When?, Where?, and Why?. Model how to identify the main idea

and supporting details. You can call this process “summarizing” and explain how summarizing helps us better understand what we read.



- How can knowing about the structure of an article (Who?, What?, When?, Where?, and Why?) help you better comprehend the story the article tells?
- What differences can you expect between how a story of courage is told in a book and how it is told in an article?

2. Have individual students choose and read one of the articles. To help students make a selection, you could consider providing a brief overview of each article. You can limit the number of students that can join a group to ensure that all the articles are read. They form groups with other students who read the same article. Provide all the students with a copy of the “Five Ws Chart” handout (see Handouts at the end of the lesson).
3. Ask each group to collaboratively complete the “Five Ws Chart” handout to identify the Who?, What?, When?, Where?, and Why? in the articles they read.



As students work, ask them to give an example of an inference they made about the person in the article. Encourage them to think about how they made that inference, such as what prior knowledge or what context clues in the article led them to think that way. You can formatively assess their ability to use details from the text to make inferences.

4. Ask students to individually identify the main idea and supporting details, using the “Summary of the Article” handout (see Handouts at the end of the lesson).



Summarizing can be an effective post-reading strategy since it requires students to select only the important information. Students can determine which words/phrases/sentences are unnecessary for understanding the main idea of the article and cross them out with a pencil. They can also substitute terms in the article with more familiar ones. This process will help them identify the main idea and relevant supporting details more effectively, and, thus, write a more succinct summary.

5. After students have time to identify a main idea and supporting details using the “Summary of the Article” handout, they can share what they identified with others in their article group. To begin, the students can determine the similarities and differences among their ideas. Next, for the ideas that are different, they can discuss which supporting details led them to their conclusion.



- How do you know which details are important to include?
- What events in the story are most important? Why do you think that?
- How does this detail explain/support the main idea (i.e., that this person

was courageous)?

- If your goal is to share a summary of the act of courage reported in this article with other students in the class, which details would help you convey your point most effectively?
- If you have questions about the act of courage and cannot find details in the article to answer the questions, how could the author have improved his or her writing?

6. Individually, students use the main idea and supporting details that they identified in the handout to write a paragraph summary of the article.



At the end of this lesson, you could collect both the “Summary of the Article” handout and the paragraph summary. You could review the “Summary of the Article” handout to see how the students used the information in that handout to develop their paragraph summary. You could assess the student’s ability to identify the main idea and supporting details in the paragraph summary. You could also formatively assess students’ use of summarizing as a post-reading strategy to aid comprehension.

You can use the following holistic scoring guide to assess the paragraph:

- 4 points:** Identifies the main idea clearly and accurately
Gives 3 or more clear examples of how the person showed courage
Consistently uses complete sentences
Contains few errors in grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling
- 3 points:** Identifies the main idea clearly and accurately
Gives 2 examples of how the person showed courage
Generally uses complete sentences
May contain some errors in grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling
- 2 points:** Identifies the main idea, but not clearly or accurately
Gives 1 example of how the person showed courage
Contains some incomplete sentences that may be distracting to the reader
Contains errors in grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling that may be distracting to the reader

(continued on next page)

- 1 point:** Identifies the main idea inaccurately or not at all
Does not provide examples of how the person showed courage
Includes incomplete sentences that are distracting to the reader
Contains repeated errors in grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling that may be distracting to the reader

7. As a whole class, begin a discussion on how the situations in each of the articles were similar and/or dissimilar. Add the names of the people in the article to the Courageous/Not Courageous chart (see lesson 1) and modify, if necessary, the whole-class definition of courage.



You could expand the whole-class discussion to include a comparison between how acts of courage are depicted in biographies (e.g., *The Bravest Dog Ever*) versus magazine articles. You could also discuss the craft of writing nonfiction (in terms of how an author did/did not select the right details to illustrate the main idea).



- How did the people in the articles show courage?
- Do you think the person had to overcome any fears in order to show courage? What might have been a consequence of their action (e.g., loss of money, loss of time, loss of friends, risk to their life, etc.)?
- Why do you think the person in the article acted that way?
- Do you think it might have been easier for some of the people in the articles to be more courageous than others?



The teacher should provide time for students to talk about the articles. By talking to others and hearing their ideas, students form, test, and revise ideas. Encourage students to use courage-related words from the Word Wall.



- How did knowing about the general structure of a article help you anticipate the main idea before even reading the article?
- How did the graphic organizer—the Five Ws Chart—help you comprehend the main idea of the article?
- How did summarizing the article help you comprehend the main idea of the article?

Handouts: Lesson 3

Name: _____ Date: _____

Five Ws Chart

Title of the Article: _____

Who is this article about?
What happened?
Where did it happen?
When did it happen?
Why (and how) did it happen?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Summary of the Article

Summary	Main Idea
	Supporting Details
Your Thoughts	

Lesson 4: Refining the Definition of Courage

Summary: Read aloud *Aunt Clara Brown: Official Pioneer* by L. Lowery (1999), and discuss “everyday” acts of courage and nonfiction text features.

Assessment: Students write a paragraph (expressing a main idea and supporting details) to a prompt.

Grade-level Expectations Addressed:

W3C: Write expository text with a main idea and three or more supporting details

Classroom Arrangement:

Students will work as a whole group, in small groups, and individually in this lesson.

Materials Needed:

- *Aunt Clara Brown, Official Pioneer* or a similar biography that explores everyday acts of courage
- Writer’s notebook and/or paper for each student

Activities:

1. Read aloud *Aunt Clara Brown*. Discuss examples of Aunt Clara’s courageous acts and how these compare to the courageous acts displayed by Balto in lesson 1.



Since the book is 48 pages long, you may want to start reading this book aloud to students at the end of lesson 1.

2. Ask students to think about Aunt Clara’s acts of everyday courage and imagine what those kinds of acts would look like in real life today. Share an example of what you would consider an everyday act of courage to help illustrate this concept.
3. Students may realize that acts of courage can be expressed differently. They may begin to question whether an act of courage requires a dramatic action (for example, a rescue) or whether it can be a personal triumph over adversity (for example, overcoming a fear of speaking in class in order to make an important point) or both. At this time, you could also address any misconceptions students might have about courage (for example, that daring—but possibly unwise—stunts are brave).



You could use the following types of questions to begin a class discussion.

- What would you say to someone who said that...(for example, taking a dare) is brave?
- Does a brave act need to be publicly known in order to be called courageous?

4. Ask students to write a paragraph in their writer's notebook (or on loose paper) that answers the question "What is an act of courage?" Explain that the paragraph should contain a main idea and three or more carefully chosen supporting details. Encourage students to use a graphic organizer (such as the one in lesson 1) to focus their thoughts.



This is an opportunity to assess students' abilities to express a main idea and support it with related details. When reviewing the students' graphic organizers and paragraphs, you should also look for how individual students are using the information from previous lessons and class discussions to support their opinions and develop personally meaningful definitions of courage.

The students' paragraphs may be assessed using the following scoring guide.

- 2 points:** Includes main idea and three important details
- 1 point:** Includes main idea and/or only one or two important details
- 0 points:** Includes no main idea and/or supporting details

Lesson 5: Finding and Analyzing Information in Nonfiction Texts: Biography Book Clubs (i.e., Literature Circles)

Summary: Students consider nonfiction text features and use these features to select and read a biography of a courageous person.

Assessment: Students complete the “Biography Hunt” and “Using Text Features” handouts and write a paragraph with a main idea and supporting details outlining the life of the person they chose.

Grade-level Expectations Addressed:

R1F: Apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension

R1H: Apply post-reading skills to identify and explain the relationship between the main idea and supporting details.

R3A: Locate and interpret key information in illustrations, title, chapter headings, table of contents,...[and] captions...to answer questions

R3C: Use details from the text to answer questions, retell main idea and important details, organize a sequence of events, ...[and] draw conclusions...

W3C: Write expository text with a main idea and three or more supporting details

Classroom Arrangement:

Students begin this lesson with whole group instruction, then work in small groups as well as individually.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of biographies about courageous people (See activity 2 to determine how many books and copies are needed)
- “Biography Hunt” handout (see Handouts at the end of the lesson)
- “Using Text Features” handout (see Handouts at the end of the lesson)
- Paper

Activities:

1. Briefly introduce the collection of biographies from which students will choose. (Students will read their biographies independently.) The introduction may include a general overview of each person.



You could consult the school librarian or media specialist to identify biographies for this lesson. The biographies should tell the story of a person who exhibited courage. They should represent a wide variety of courageous acts, ranging from public displays of heroism to personal triumphs over adversity. All of the biographies should include most of the text features listed in the R3A grade-level expectation listed above.

2. Show students a biography that you have chosen to read. Explain how you used the nonfiction text features (e.g., title, table of contents, chapter headings, captions, charts, graphs, glossary, etc.) to decide whether you were interested in reading the book. Model your thought process for the students (“When I saw the illustration on the cover, I figured that this book would be about flying, and I love to fly…”).



When deciding the number of books to offer as choices to students, consider the number of students in the class and the number of students you believe work best in a group. For example, for a class of 24 students in which you believe four students can work productively together, you could offer six different sets of books.



- What is a table of contents?
- How is a table of contents helpful?
- When would you use a table of contents?
- What are captions?
- How are captions helpful?
- How can we tell from examining text features what a book is about?

3. Provide time for students to peruse the biographies and decide which one they want to read.
4. After choosing a book, each student will use the “Biography Hunt” handout (see Handouts at the end of the lesson) and preview the book. The handout asks students to look through their book to locate each of the specified nonfiction text features. If they find a feature, they will put a checkmark in the box next to that text feature.
5. After determining which text features are included in their book, students can begin using those text features to find clues about where in the book they might find information about how the person was courageous. They can record their predictions on the “Using Text Features” handout (see Handouts at the end of the lesson). In the first column, they list the text feature; in the second column, they list the clue in the text feature that makes them think there is information about courage in a particular page/section. Later, after students have read the book individually, they will use the third column to assess whether their prediction was correct.



It is possible that students will not find clues in any of the text features if they search only for the word “courage.” Encourage them to also use the words/phrases included on the Word Wall.



You can assess individual student’s comprehension of text features by examining the completed “Using Text Features” handouts.

You can use the following scoring guide to assess the handouts.

2 points: 3 acceptable answers

1 point: 1–2 acceptable answers

0 points: No acceptable answers

6. After students have had time to make their predictions, ask them to form a small group with the other students who chose the same book.
7. Students in each group should compare the text features and clues they listed on the “Using Text Features” handout.
8. Then, in their groups, students will use their text features/clues to gather information from the biography to answer the question “Why was _____ courageous?” They should find details in the text to support their ideas.



It is possible that some students may determine that the person in the biography was not courageous. Encourage students to find details in the text to support this conclusion.

9. As students examine the biographies, move around the room, conferring with the groups. As you do this, you can observe how students are using the text features and making decisions about the usefulness of those features. Provide guidance as necessary.
10. As you confer, ask each group to think of a way of communicating the information gathered to the rest of the class. For example, the group might decide to create a graphic organizer (e.g., a web or a timeline) to help show the class what the person did and why he or she was courageous.
11. Give each group a chance to share. To conclude, ask if any students would like to change their selected biography (because they are no longer interested in the person they originally chose, or are more interested in another person), and redistribute the books as necessary.
12. Students will read their selected biography individually (either in class, during reading time, or as homework). Reading the biographies may extend several days or more. Individually,

students should reflect on the predictions they made on the “Using Text Features” handout. In the third column, they can now evaluate (e.g., using a happy face/sad face) if their prediction was correct or incorrect.

13. As students read their selected biography, be sure to make time each day (15 minutes or so, as appropriate), for “book clubs” or “literature circles” (students reading the same biographies) or to meet together to discuss progress, observations, and impressions, including questions and/or difficulties individual students are having comprehending the text. Circulate among the groups during this time, conferring with them and helping them with comprehension and/or reading strategies as necessary.



- Were your predictions correct?
- What did you do if you discovered that your prediction was not correct, or you didn't find information about the person's act of courage?
- Were certain text features more helpful than others in finding out how the person was courageous? Why?

14. After the students have read their biographies, ask them to write a paragraph (or more) about their subject. The paragraph should retell briefly about the subject's life and include at least three details showing how the person was courageous.



The students' paragraphs may be assessed using the following scoring guide.

2 points: Includes main idea and three important details

1 point: Includes main idea and/or only one or two important details

0 points: Includes no main idea and/or supporting details

Note also that by comparing the students' writing in this lesson to the paragraphs they wrote in lesson 3, you can assess each student's progress toward the grade-level expectations addressed in the overview of the unit. These paragraphs can also be used as part of the student's writing portfolio and shared with parents at conferences.

Handouts: Lesson 5

Name: _____ Date: _____

Biography Hunt

Title of the Book: _____

Does your book have ...

- ☐ a title
- ☐ a table of contents
- ☐ chapter headings
- ☐ illustrations
- ☐ captions

Does your book have...

- ☐ charts
- ☐ diagrams
- ☐ graphs
- ☐ glossary
- ☐ maps

Name: _____ Date: _____

Using Text Features

Text Feature	Clue	Correct or Incorrect?

Lesson 6: Writing Biographical Profiles: Applying Knowledge about Nonfiction Texts

Summary: In this lesson, students will choose a person they believe is courageous and use biographies (and the text elements in biographies) to gather information.

Assessment: Students will develop a biographical profile poster that effectively organizes and presents important information about a person and his or her acts of courage. They also complete a “Courageous Character Analysis” handout and write an expository piece (using a graphic organizer) that provides reasons why they think one person is more courageous than another.

Grade-level Expectations Addressed:

R1H: Apply post-reading skills to identify and explain the relationship between the main idea and supporting details

R3A: Locate and interpret key information in illustrations, title, chapter headings, table of contents,...captions...to answer questions

R3C: Use details from the text to answer questions, retell main idea and important details, organize a sequence of events, ...draw conclusions...

W3C: Write expository text with a main idea and three or more supporting details

Classroom Arrangement:

In this lesson, students will work individually and/or in pairs.

Materials Needed:

- Writer’s notebook and/or paper for each student
- Set of index cards for each student
- “Biographical Profile Poster Project Criteria” handout
- “Biographical Profile Poster Sketch” handout
- “Courageous Character Analysis” handout
- Poster board for each profile (the size of the poster will depend on the amount of space allocated in the classroom or hallway for the display)
- A variety of construction materials that students can use to design and produce their posters (e.g., markers, rulers, etc.)

Activities:

1. Individually or with a partner, students identify a person (e.g., an athlete, historical figure, scientist, person with a disability, etc.) they believe has displayed courage.



You could talk with the school librarian or media specialist about locating a variety of nonfiction books to help students identify a person to investigate. It is possible that students may initially select one person but, after gathering some information, decide to investigate someone else.



Students could spend time browsing Web sites that highlight courageous people or heroes. KidsClick! (sunsite.Berkeley.edu/KidsClick!) is a children's search engine compiled by librarians. Students can enter "biography" in the search box to see a list of over sixty biography Web sites. The Yahooligans Directory (www.yahooligans.com/School_Bell/Social_Studies/History/Biographies) includes categories of biographies such as astronauts, athletes, explorers, political and world leaders, and women. The American Library Association hosts a Web page for children with links to biography-related Web sites (www.ala.org/gwstemplate.cfm?section=greatwebsites&template=/cfapps/gws/displaysection.cfm&sec=11).

2. Before students begin gathering information about the person they selected, encourage them to record what they already know as well as questions they have about the person. Brainstorm a list of questions with students that will help guide the information-gathering process. Their list would likely include questions like these.



- What problem(s) did the person face?
- What caused the problem(s)?
- How did the person solve the problem(s)?
- What helped the person solve the problem(s)?
- Did solving the problem(s) help others?



By using this pre-reading/research strategy, students can be more efficient at locating information about their subject. You might consider having students write their questions and record the information they find on a sheet of paper, in their writer's notebook, or on several index cards. You can then evaluate the quality of these questions and information as part of your assessment of student progress.

3. Each individual or partnership will develop a biographical profile poster that describes a person. The posters can be mounted on a wall in a display titled "Lives That Made a Difference" (or some other appropriate title). Provide students with the "Biographical Profile Poster Project Criteria" handout (see Handouts at the end of the lesson). They will first gather information, then develop a sketch for their poster, and, finally, produce the poster using a variety of construction materials.

4. Encourage students to gather information from a variety of nonfiction sources, such as biographies, classroom magazine articles, Web sites, and reference books. You could talk with your school librarian or media specialist about other resources that students can use to gather information.



You might consider talking with students about how the elements of nonfiction in a printed text are similar and different from the elements on a Web page. For example, a table of contents in a printed text appears as a menu with a list of hyperlinks on a Web page. Graphics/illustrations on a Web page may also be links that take the reader to additional information. Unlike printed text, it is difficult to identify the author or his/her credibility in many Web pages.

5. As students work on gathering information, take time to observe them. By observing them and talking with them, you can learn what reading strategies they are applying to nonfiction texts, how they are using the elements and features of nonfiction to find information efficiently, and how they are focusing their information-gathering process using their initial research questions and pre-reading strategies. Provide mini-lessons (i.e., systematic direct instruction for an individual, small group, or whole class) on finding information, using a table of contents, a glossary or index, and on interpreting graphic text features such as photographs and illustrations, as needed.



You could encourage students to use technological resources to produce the written and visual items to include on their posters. Students could use word-processing or presentation software (including the Word Art feature to create graphical titles), paint/illustration software, royalty-free clip art/photographs, digital cameras, and/or concept-mapping software.

6. Before students complete the written summary (what made the person courageous) part of the poster, provide each student with a “Courageous Character Analysis” handout (see Handouts at the end of the lesson). Each student should identify the actions of the person that lead them to believe the person was courageous. Then, individually, they will write a response to the question at the bottom of the handout, “Why was this person courageous in your opinion? Give at least three reasons.”



You might collect the “Courageous Character Analysis” handout from individual students to assess how they are interpreting the information gathered from the nonfiction texts they researched. You can also use the following guide to assess how students are able to provide details to support a main idea.

2 points: Includes main idea and three important details

1 point: Includes main idea and/or only one or two important details

0 points: Includes no main idea and/or supporting details

7. Once students have gathered information for each required section of the poster, they can develop a sketch for how they plan to lay out the poster. They can use the “Biographical Profile Poster Sketch” handout (see Handouts at the end of the lesson) and show this to the teacher for feedback before beginning to produce the poster.
8. Students can present their biographical profile posters to the class before adding them to the “Lives That Made a Difference” display.



You could provide feedback on how effectively the students communicate information about their courageous person.

9. Ask students to choose any two people in the “Lives That Made a Difference Display” and compare how their acts of courage were similar and/or different. Ask them also to identify which of the two people they thought was more courageous and explain why.

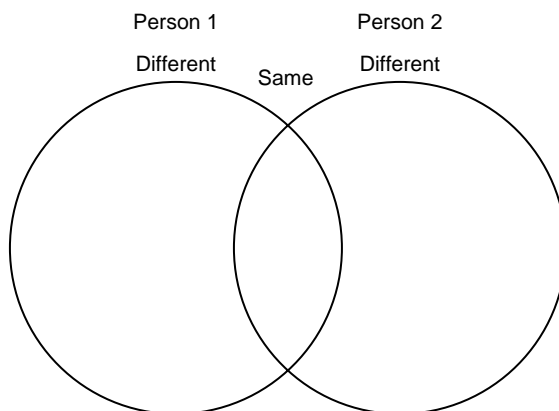
In their writers’ notebooks, students should write a paragraph or more that includes at least three reasons why they thought one person was more courageous than the other. Ask them to provide specific details to support each of their reasons.

Before students write, have them create a graphic organizer to show how they compared the two people. Ask them to include a title and labels.



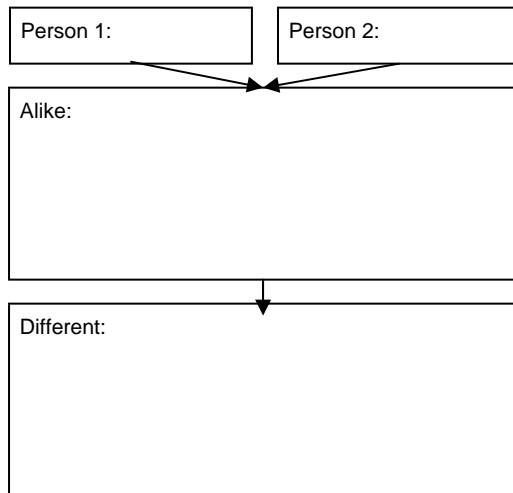
Sample graphic organizers:

Venn Diagram



Compare-Contrast Chart

	Person 1	Person 2
Characteristics		

Compare-Contrast Diagram

The teacher may collect the expository pieces and assess individual student's ability to use details from the text to compare and contrast, make inferences about problems and solutions, and provide supporting details for a main idea.

You can use the following scoring guide to assess the written reflections.

- 2 points:** Includes main idea and three important details
- 1 point:** Includes main idea and/or only one or two important details
- 0 points:** Includes no main idea and/or supporting details

You can also assess the graphic organizer using the following scoring guide:

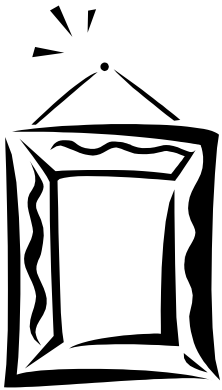
- 2 points:** Includes all required elements, such as title and/or labels; includes sufficient details to show to compare two people
- 1 point:** Includes some required elements, such as title and/or labels; includes some details to compare two people
- 0 points:** Missing required elements, such as title and/or labels; includes irrelevant details or is missing details for comparison

Handouts: Lesson 6

Name: _____ Date: _____

Biographical Profile Poster Project Criteria

Courageous Person's Name: _____



You will contribute a biographical profile poster to the “Lives That Made a Difference” display. After you choose a courageous person to profile and gather information about that person, you will design a poster to hang in the display.

Before you begin using the information you gathered to design your poster, you should:

- ☐ show your plan for the poster to your teacher (see “Biographical Profile Poster Sketch” handout), and
- ☐ decide what materials you will need to make the poster.

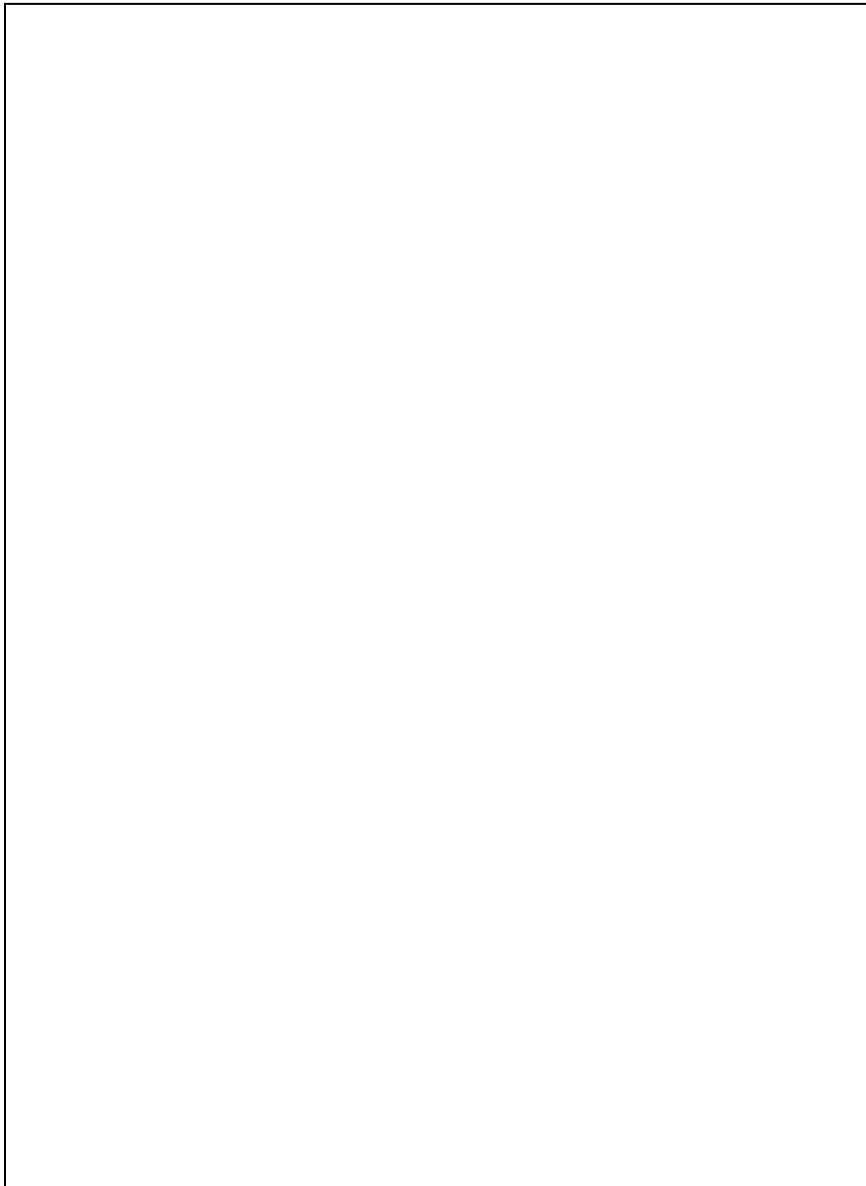
The poster should include the following written and visual items:

- ☐ a **title** that clearly and briefly characterizes the person’s courageousness, along with graphics,
- ☐ a **timeline** that shows important events in the person’s life (e.g., date and place of birth/death, date of major accomplishments, etc.),
- ☐ a **written summary** of what made the person courageous (use some examples of sensory details in your writing to help describe the person’s courageousness), and
- ☐ **graphics and/or illustrations**—along with captions—to help communicate important information about your person.

Name: _____ Date: _____

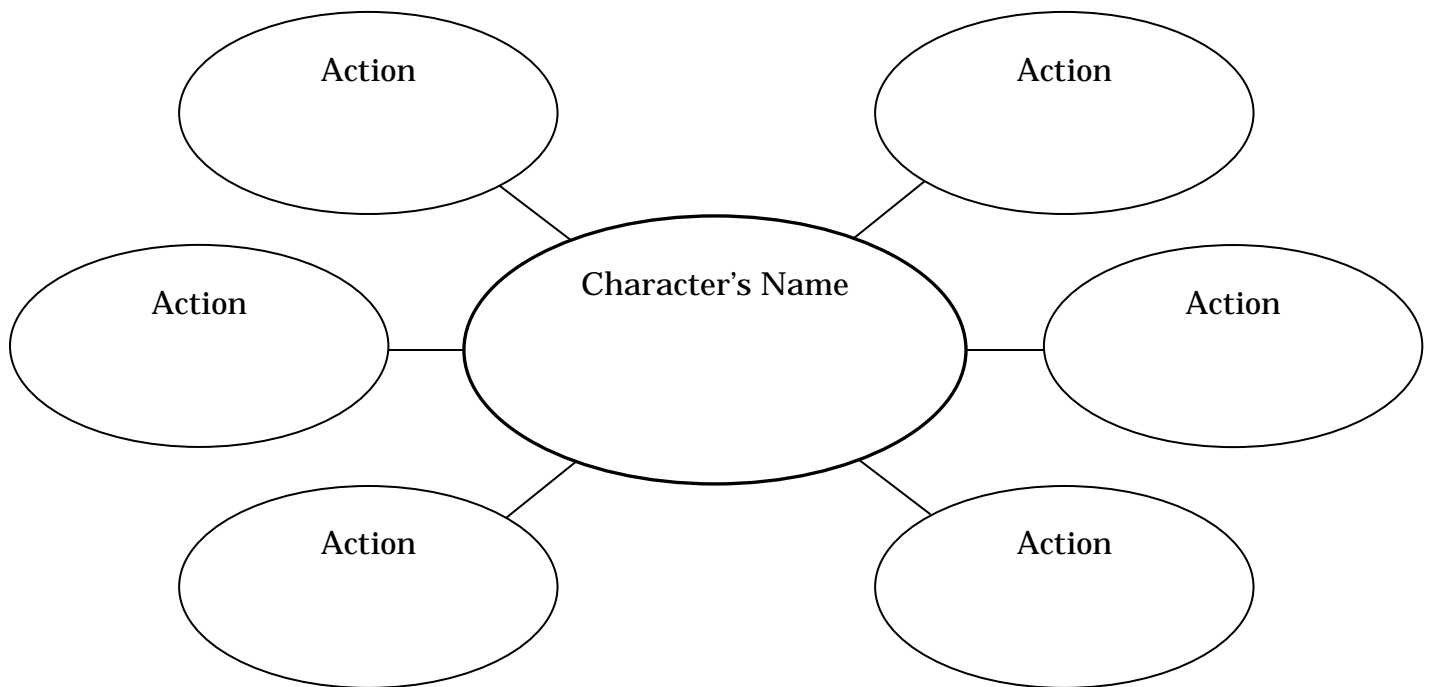
Biographical Profile Poster Sketch

Before you begin using the information you gathered to design your poster, you should make a sketch of how you want to arrange the written and visual items on the poster.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to sketch their poster layout. It occupies the lower half of the page.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Courageous Character Analysis



Why was this person courageous in your opinion? Give at least three reasons.

Lesson 7: Reflecting Personally through Expository Writing

Summary: To conclude this unit, students will reflect on how their definition of courage has changed over the last several days/weeks.

Assessment: Students write, revise, and edit a piece of expository writing that expresses their understanding of the concept of courage.

Grade-level Expectations Addressed:

W3C: Write expository text with a main idea and three or more supporting details

Classroom Arrangement:

In this lesson, students will work individually.

Materials Needed:

- Writer's notebook for each student/paper

Activities:

1. Students will develop an expository piece that answers one of the following questions.
 - What does courage mean to you?
 - How can a person show courage?
2. You should decide how to help students develop, revise, and edit their drafts, and publish their writing. Students should be aware that their published writing will be assessed using the following criteria.
 - Includes a clear definition of courage
 - Gives three or more supporting details
 - Consistently uses complete sentences
 - Contains few errors in grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling

Note: Post these criteria in a visible place so children can see them while they work.



As students develop their ideas for the writing project, you may confer with individual students to help guide their progress.

- How is your writing going?
- Which of the two questions do you think you might want to write about?

- What ideas have you found?
- What is your plan to gather more information on your topic?
- How are you making sure that your expository piece meets the criteria?



Students should take time to develop the topic of their choice by creating a list of words and phrases that relate to it, free-writing about the topic for 10 minutes, asking questions like “What’s important about this topic?”, generating a list of questions related to the topic, or talking with a peer about the topic. Encourage students to use a graphic organizer with a space for the main idea and several spaces for supporting ideas.

After taking the time to develop their topic (one of the questions provided), students will develop a draft that answers the question and includes several supporting ideas. They can include examples/ideas from nonfiction books, class discussions, peer discussions, entries in their journals or writers notebooks, and the biographical profile posters.



You should collect the students’ published expository pieces and use the “Sample Scoring Guide” below to assess the students’ ability to identify a main idea and provide supporting details.

- 4 points:** Includes a clear answer to the question
 Gives three or more different supporting details
 Consistently uses complete sentences
 Contains few errors in grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling
- 3 points:** Includes an answer to the question
 Gives three or more supporting details
 Generally uses complete sentences
 May contain some errors in grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling
- 2 points:** Gives an answer that is unclear or incomplete
 Gives at least two supporting details
 Contains some incomplete sentences that may be distracting to the reader
 Contains errors in grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling that may be distracting to the reader
- 1 point:** Gives an inaccurate definition of courage or definition is omitted
 Does not provide examples of how someone could show courage
 Includes incomplete sentences that are distracting to the reader
 Contains repeated errors in grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling that may be distracting to the reader

Teacher Reflection

1. How are the students' skills in identifying a main idea and well-chosen supporting details developing? Are there students who might need additional support? Are there students who might be ready to move on to other elements in the craft of writing—for example, grabbing the reader's attention in the opening sentences/paragraphs, transitional words to link ideas, etc.?
2. What parts of the information-gathering process challenged my students the most? What changes did I make to meet the varying needs of my students in terms of gathering information?
3. To what extent were the students productively engaged in the work? How do I know this?
4. What feedback did I receive from students indicating that they developed an understanding about the relevant content and that I met my objectives for this unit?